

LEARNING PREFERENCES BETWEEN PHYSICAL EDUCATION STUDENTS FROM RURAL AND URBAN AREA

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ABSTRACT

Despite the wide range of measuring instruments in the field of sport and physical activity offered by Ostrow (1996), scarce those who help us to know what are the participative preferences of students when learning Physical Education. Being knowledgeable about what the participative preferences of students are, can offer valuable information applicable to the teaching-learning process (Ellison, Boykin, Tyler, and Dillihunt, 2005). The stated goal was to determine and compare the participative preferences when learning between urban and rural Physical Education students. 562 students from Primary Education (N = 415) and Secondary Education (N = 147) took part in the study. From Those 160 were from rural areas and 402 from urban areas. All of them filled out the Graupera / Ruiz Preferences Scale of Social Interaction in PE Learning (GR) that has 28 items divided into four categories: affiliation, competition, cooperation and individualism. Multivariate analysis showed that there are significant differences depending on the area you live, in individualism and affiliation factors, being the rural zone that score the highest. There are several facts that affect the practice and learning in Physical Education among which the personal and environmental facts are highlighted (Sallis, 1995), understanding this last one as an explanatory element of the results.

Keywords: Social interaction, learning preferences, urban area, rural area

INTRODUCTION

The role of personal preferences when facing learning tasks has been an issue that has concerned psychologists and educators. These preferences are much more than mere appearances and are the result of the dynamic and complex interaction of the natural dispositions of the individual and their experiences and past learning and they show up in dimensions ranging from the cognitive to the physiological, through the affective and social.

The learning that occurs in physical education is a complex psychosocial phenomenon that involves a learner's relationship student-teacher and that in recent years has received special attention (Martinek, 1991; Cervello and Santos-Rosa, 2000).

The question that many professionals in this field are raising is the following: how to confirm the preferences in the student's learning? There have been no conclusive studies regarding the students' perception in relation to their participation in Physical Education classes; although in recent years that interest has increased (Ruiz, Graupera, Rico and Mata, 2004, Ruiz, Graupera, Moreno and Rico, 2010).

One of the most novel instruments at present, and perhaps one of the only ones that we can find in the field of sport and physical activity (Ostrow, 1996) to measure perceptions and cognitions of schoolchildren regarding their interactive preferences or social interaction is the GR Scale of Social Interaction in Learning (Ruiz, Graupera, Fraile y Rico, 1997).

These preferences were classified into four interactive dimensions or forms of preferred interaction, following the existing Echeita and Martín's theory (1991). The cooperative dimension, where individual achievement is contingent upon the whole, the competitive dimension, where collective goals are contingent on individuals, individualistic dimension, in which the goal is to look for the success and the individual results negating the importance of the rest of the member; and affiliative dimension, whose goal is the pursuit of well-being and acceptance.

Most studies have been based on differences according to the gender. Thus, Ruiz, Graupera, Rico and Mata (2004) in a study of interactive preferences in PE lessons of boys and girls of Secondary Education, showed how cooperative dimension was the dominant dimension of the four, with the girls who were rated high in cooperative and affiliative dimensions and the guys in the competitive and individualistic. On its part, Ruiz, Graupera, Moreno and Rico (2010), although the study was conducted with children in rural and urban centers, they focused the results according to the gender and the course they were in. The results were similar to ones of the study named above.

There are few studies that have evaluated the differences between schools in urban and rural areas, hence the importance of this study. According to Taberner (2009) the urban environment is more individualized and less associative therefore presumably with less autonomy for children. Delgado Linares (2011) defends the precocity of rural students, having corroborated it Fernández (2012) in his study of the motor competence in three- and four-year old children of rural and urban environments. Between the possible causes is the strong community ties that help the child develop motor independence (Sevilla, Sevilla, 1984).

Therefore, the aim of this study was to analyze the student's interactive preferences in PE classes from rural and urban centers through the GR scale of Social Participation in Learning. What are their preferences? Are they different from those students who live in rural area of the metropolitan area?

METHODS

Sample

Primary schoolchildren (N = 415) and secondary education (147) of both genders (277 boys and 285 girls) and aged between 6 and 18 years (M = 10.53, SD = 2.69) took part in this study. Of the total, 402 were from metropolitan area, while the remaining 160 were from rural area. All were informed of the research applying the relevant permits for proper development. The application was carried out in PE classes using a research team member, not being any problems to note.

Instrument

In this study we used the GR Scale of Social Participation in Learning developed and validated by Ruiz and Graupera in 1997 and re-evaluated years after to improve its internal consistency and maintaining the same factor solution (Rico, 2003, Ruiz et al., 2000) to establish the social preferences of subjects at school age. The scale consists of 28 items and is divided into 4 dimensions of 7 items each: cooperative (I like to participate in group work), competitive (I like to do things better than the rest), affiliative (I work for a team so that they want to be with me) and individualistic (I like to work my way, without worrying about what others are doing). Each item is presented in a Likert scale of 4 points, in which 1 indicates strongly disagree and 4 the entire agreement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive and differential analysis

In the tables 1 and 2 the scale's global descriptive data are presented as well as those concerning the area in which they reside.

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted using as dependent variables the 4 dimensions of the scale and as independent, the area of residence, and not finding significant differences in terms of the area.

Table 1 Descriptive data

Dependent Variable	Area	Mean	Standard error	Confidence interval 95%			
				Límite inferior	Límite superior	Lower limit	Upper limit
COOPERATIVE	Metropolitan	3.631	.031			3.570	3.692
	Rural	3.564	.037			3.492	3.637
COMPETITIVE	Metropolitan	2.496	.056			2.386	2.605
	Rural	2.638	.066			2.508	2.768
INDIVIDUALISTIC	Metropolitan	2.382	.053			2.279	2.485
	Rural	2.458	.063			2.335	2.581
AFFILIATIVE	Metropolitan	2.974	.042			2.892	3.055
	Rural	3.057	.050			2.959	3.154

Table 2 Multivariate Contrasts

Effect		Valor	F	Gl de la hipótesis	Gl del error	Signif.
Zone	Traza de Pillai	.016	1.510(a)	4.000	379.000	.199
	Lambda de Wilks	.984	1.510(a)	4.000	379.000	.199
	Traza de Hotelling	.016	1.510(a)	4.000	379.000	.199
	Raíz mayor de Roy	.016	1.510(a)	4.000	379.000	.199

The univariate analysis did not establish either significant differences in relation to the area. What it was observed is that rural students score higher on factors such as competitiveness, individualism and affiliation, being the dimension of cooperativeness where the metropolitan area students scored higher. In general, cooperativity is where the highest values are got, followed by the affiliation. For its part, the lowest values are in the individualism. With no baseline studies we cannot compare the results obtained in this research. It can be said again that cooperation is something to stand out for schoolchildren coinciding with what Ruiz, Mendoza, Del Valle, Graupera and Rico (2000) and Rico (2003) got. This discovery is interesting to stand out, given the tendency to think that what prevails in education is competitiveness and individualism, and therefore cooperative attitudes should be developed

CONCLUSIONS

It can be concluded that the area in which the students reside is not a factor to consider when analyzing the participative differences in P.E lessons. However, there are significant differences in the study. It is proved how their participative preferences show them as cooperative and affiliative, where being part of a group and feel integrated in it is what prevails.

This study could be considered as a pilot test where it could be seen some indication of the importance of the place of residence of students in Physical Education classes. It is still pending to extend the study with a larger sample and taking as reference a large number of centers so that the results will lead to more specific data. This is about complementing a research line that Professor Ruiz and his research group are holding for several years and adding variables that may affect student's interactive preferences in Physical Education classes.

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